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ABSTRACT

Described is a model parent education program designed to provide parents of handicapped children with knowledge and technical skills to be used at home to reinforce children's skills learned in the classroom. The article outlines the organizational procedures, content, and evaluation techniques to conduct the 5-week minicourse. (Author/SBH)

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A Model Minicourse:

Parent Involvement in the Special Education Process

by

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EC101375

A Model Minicourse of Parental Involvement In the Special Education Process

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Assistant Professor

Foreword

The following article describes a model parent education program, A Model Minicourse of Parental Involvement in the Special Education Process, conducted as part of the Hartford Public Schools/University of Hartford Project Train. The article outlines the organizational procedures, content and evaluation techniques to conduct this minicourse. It can be an enjoyable learning experience for parents and teachers and can be easily replicated.

Introduction

The parent training movement in special education is a relatively recent phenomena in the United States. In less then twenty years a paradox of behavior on the part of parents has occured. On the one hand parents have fought long and hard battles at local, state and federal levels to obtain special services for their handicapped children from public schools and agencies where none had existed. On the other hand, abuses within special education, such as; inappropriate screening procedures and criteria, the lack of accountability for quality programming, and the failure to provide equal services best suited to the individual needs of the child, have been brought to light primarily by parents.

Recent developments in legislation (Public Law 94-142; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) reflect a new concern for the rights of the handicapped and their parents. The right to an equal public education, the right to due process protection, and the right to adequate funding are the focal points of concern. Legislation covers such topics as the trend toward mainstreaming handicapped children in less restrictive environments, training regular classroom personnel and parents of handicapped children in the needs of the handicapped that are stipulated in the law.

The trend among the involvement of parent groups with educational services regarding the needs of their handicapped children is evident by the amount of research that has accumulated. The data from these reports supports the contention that parental involvement assists in the educational development of the special child. Parent training programs have been developed around one of these models; behavioral, psychological insight, or experiential.

First,the behavioral model teaches parents basic terminology, principles of reinforcement, observation, measurement, and consequence procedures. Following one or more training sessions, the parent trainer usually serves as a consultant to the parents in applying what they have learned to specific behaviors they want to change. Second, the psychological insight model focuses on developing a comprehension and understanding of why children behave as they do and emphasizes analysis of the dynamic interaction between parent and child.

Third, the experiential model stresses direct learning experience for parents through modeling examples and directed structional activities and interaction between parent and child.

Rationale for the Model

In order to provide Project Train with an effective parent training program a model was developed integrating the most valid compenents of past models so that we can best meet the needs of parents who have handicapped children. We decided to ask the special education teachers to take on the additional responsibility of parent training. It was our belief that education is a responsibility of parents and they have a right, morally, ethically and legally, to participate in the processes and decisions that are made on their children's educational future. Also, research demonstrates that when parents are included in the educational process children learn more, adjust better, and progress faster. Furthermore, the potential for delivering more and better services to handicapped children through parent training encourages parents to become actively involved in the process of educating children and provides a bridge between the parent, teacher, and the child.

Parent Involvement in the Special Education Process, a community-based maodel for a minicourse sponsored by Project Train in the Spring of 1977, was designed to provide parents with knowledge and technical skills to be used at home to reinforce children's skills in the classroom.

Course Objectives

The Specific goals of the course were:

1. to create an awareness of the special educational needs of handicapped children
2. to help parents develop knowledge and skills that encourage school success in their children
3. to teach parents observational and behavioral management skills in order to handle problems in the home
4. to encourage communications with the children's teachers.

Course Organization

The course will consist of five, one-to-one and a half hour meetings held for five weeks. The participants will meet at the school so that the setting will become an informal pleasant atmosphere with tables, comfortable chairs and a blackboard.

The recruiting of parents for each of the sessions can be conducted by the Project Train community workers. The names of possible participants for the course can be solicited from the special education teachers. Names of parents are collected and a letter (See appendix I) is sent out to seek volunteers for enrollment in the course. This letter explains the purpose, content and teachers of the course. It also invites all parents to attend.

The course is taught by one or two special class teachers from the school with the consulting assistance of a Special Education Professor from the University of Hartford.

Course Content and Topics

The content of the course is a combination of presentation, discussions and demonstrations on such topics as the right of parents; the definition of the special education student; the purposes and procedures of the pupil placement team(PPT); record keeping; the principles of creating better management and successful learning in the behavior modification process; career planning for parents and children; and the ways parents can help in the educational process. These meetings will be presented in a group format as well as individual parent-teacher conferences.

The presenting teachers in consultation with the special education professor will organize the content of each session according to the needs and skill of the participants.

Results & Evaluations

The success of the course can be measured by informal evaluation procedures. Attendance throughout the course is an excellent indication of interest. Participant reports of success with their children provide another informal measure. Presentations and questions by parents can provide additional information about the success of the course. Observation by outside personnel can also be employed to measure results. In addition formal evaluation forms filled out by the parents can lend support to the process and product of this model.

In summary, this model has been developed to aid the parent in bridging the gap between knowledge and skill in the educational process. The model will provide teachers and parents with an opportunity to create an integrated involvement in order to deliver more appropriate special education services to their children.

TEACHER CORPS CYCLE X

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TO: All Parents - Kinsella Community School

DATE: February 8, 1977

FROM: Peter R. Roach, Co-Director
Project TRAIN

Project TRAIN and the Kinsella Community School invite you to attend a mini-course on Special Education which will meet once a week for five weeks starting in March. This informal course will include discussions that focus on such students' special educational needs, success in school subjects, and the identification and handling of behavioral problems at school and in the home. Topics such as parent rights, behavior modification, career planning and parent involvement will be presented in group discussions. This course will also feature individual parent-teacher conferences and how parents can be come more informed.

The sessions will be led by Mr. Robert D'Amore and Mr. Jaime Nieves, Special Education teachers at Kinsella.

These sessions will be from 2:45 to 3:45 PM at the Kinsella School on the day of those listed below which is preferred by most parents who are interested.

Please check the day that you can attend from 2:45 to 3:45 PM.

Monday	Lunes
Tuesday	Martes
Thursday	Jueves

_____
Parent's Name - Nombre del Padre

_____
Address - Direccion

_____
Phone Number - Telefono

El Proyecto TRAIN y la Escuela de la Comunidad Kinsella le invitan a que asista a un curso sobre Educacion Especial, que se reunira una vez a la semana por cinco semanas comenzando en Marzo. Este curso incluira discusiones sobre las necesidades educativas, exito en las clases y la identificacion y manejo de problemas de comportamiento en la escuela y en el hogar. Temas, tales como, derechos de los padres, cambio de comportamiento, carreras para el futuro y el envolvimiento de los padres seran presentados en las discusiones.

Los maestros de este curso seran el Senor Robert D'Amore y el Senor Jaime Nieves, maestros de Educacion Especial en Kinsella.

Estas classes seran desde las 2:45 - 3:45 en la escuela Kinsella en los dias favoritos de los padres interesados.

Por favor seleccione el dia que mas le convenga de 2:45 a 3:45 PM.

PSR:paw